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NOTES AND REVIEWS

The Russian Pendulum. Autocracy—Democracy—Bolshevism.

By ARTHUR BULLARD. New York, Macmillan, 1919.

Mr. Bullard, in trying to explain the origin of Soviet rule in Russia, starts out with the very helpful idea that mass-movements of historic significance are a result of deeply rooted social, economic and political causes, and not of personal or party action. This enabled him to interpret the fall of the Kerensky régime and the advent of the Bolsheviki in a very skillful and convincing manner. Mr. Bullard differs from most of the opponents of Bolshevism in that he realizes that Kerensky and the Provisional government did not represent the masses. He speaks of "the Duma group representing the *intelligenza* of the country and the Soviets which were the only spokesmen of the masses." "There was no doubt," he says, "on the part of the rank and file that they did not want leadership from the Bourgeois parties." He believes that if Kerensky had made up his mind to lose the support of the "legalistically minded politicians of the *intelligenza*" and had gone "direct to the people" with the revolutionary measure of "Immediate Distribution of the Land," he would have regained popular support and might have induced the masses to continue the war on the side of the Allies.

Failing to do this, Mr. Bullard asserts, Kerensky and his régime were doomed. The Provisional Government did not want any revolutionary solution of the land problem, while the peasant army rapidly disintegrated through the desertion of the peasant soldiers who wanted to get home and share in the distribution of the land. Further, the continuation of the war was almost a physical impossibility for Russia. "Already by midsummer, 1917," Mr. Bullard writes, "there had been sectors of the front where there had been no food distributed to the soldiers for three days on end. When the transport was further dislocated by the winter snow, whole regiments would die of starvation. Back of all the theoretic discussion of 'war and peace' was the spectre of 'Force Majeure'." War weariness, as a result of disintegration of industry and of a lowered morale, was a natural phenomenon. The refusal of the Allies even to discuss the Russian peace for-

mula of "no annexation, no indemnities, self-determination of nations" only tended to make the war still more unpopular in Russia: "it dampened," Mr. Bullard says, "the ardor of all our friends and it gave a new and tremendous weapon to our enemies." Thus the two outstanding issues of those crucial months of summer, 1917, were "land and peace." Mr. Bullard does not think Kerensky would have succeeded by using a strong hand. "Hanging Trotzky," he says, "would not have solved the land problem, nor have made the population long for peace less passionately." Besides, "the peasants learned that there was no one to protect the Great House on the hill, the workers learned that they could not be imprisoned for demanding a living wage, the soldiers and sailors discovered that they could square their grudges against their hated officers without fear of punishment."

This unique coincidence of circumstances, economic, social and political, national and international, made the advent of Bolshevism in Russia possible. It is clear from Mr. Bullard's exposition that no individual or group of individuals is to be blamed, or praised, for this event in the history of Russia. It was like an avalanche. Lenin happened to be the leader of a faction which advocated immediate peace and immediate distribution of the land. It is evident that if there had been no Lenin and no Bolsheviki, the masses would have none the less overthrown Kerensky's coalition. The rising to power of the "Dark People," in one form or another, was historically inevitable.

This satisfactorily explains the November revolution without recurrence to "The Great Man Theory." It does Mr. Bullard honor that in the midst of a great confusion he does not lose sight of the underlying social forces. He pays, perhaps, too little heed to the industrial workers who were the actual leading force of the Soviets. He does not show the evolution of the Soviets in the course of the summer and fall of 1917 from a tolerant to a belligerent attitude towards Kerensky and his intellectual followers. He seems to have little interest in the efforts of the "Dark People" to organize and become articulate in social matters. Still, his analysis of the forces that made Bolshevism possible in Russia is clear and convincing.

When he passes, however, to the discussion of the Bolshevik phase in the history of the Russian revolution, he loses perspective and changes his whole interpretation of history. His vision becomes blurred. The social forces of the Russian nation dissolve and form an indifferent hazy background against which

looms up the sinister figures of a black ungodly giant, Lenin. There is no more a Russian nation full of desires and aspirations dictated by needs and passions, there is one mighty force of evil, Lenin—not even the Bolsheviks as a party, but one individual, Lenin.

What happened in Russia after November, 1917? There have been great changes in the structure of society. There have been social experiments on a large scale. There have been many successes and, probably, many more miscarriages and blunders. All this Mr. Bullard dismisses because as he says, “there is heavy obscurity over most of their social and economic legislation.” The simple truth is that when Mr. Bullard proceeds, in a chapter entitled “The Bolsheviks at Work,” to discuss the present Russian situation, he is so much angered by the usurpers of power that he loses sight of the broader and more significant aspects. Anger, however, is no reliable guide in dealing with sociological phenomena of worldwide importance.

The only thing which seems to attract the author's attention is the secret of Bolshevik hold over Russia. This in itself might lead to a very fruitful analysis of the internal situation. Yet Mr. Bullard disposes of the question in a quick and angry manner. The Bolsheviks, he states, have no popular backing. They are “the dictatorship of the minority.” Moreover, “the dictatorship of the minority has become a dictatorship by an individual.” The red army is “kept contented with high wages, good food, and a large license in the matter of sports.” The present dictatorship retains its power because “the nation is faced by starvation and the Bolsheviks control the ‘food cards’.” In addition they pursue the policy “Divide and rule,” they are “cynically false,” they are “very crude grafters,” they practice “betrayal of those who trusted them” and they have a “contempt for ‘morals.’” This is, according to Mr. Bullard, the whole explanation.

Yet the cautious reader, made rather sceptical by years of newspaper propaganda, is inclined to ask questions. How did it happen that the “majority” of the Russians who in November, 1917, according to Mr. Bullard, were ready for “a new experiment,” the Lenin Soviet experiment, dwindled to a minority and then gave way to “the dictatorship of an individual?” How did it happen that the population, starved and desperate, did not revolt against the usurpers? The ready answer of the press propagandists has been that *force* kept the masses in submission.

But the careful reader has his doubts. He will quote Mr. Bullard. "The peasant soldiers," says Mr. Bullard, "when they went home from the army, took their rifles with them. A Russian village today is hardly self-respecting unless it has a machine-gun and some strips of ammunition." But if this is the case and if the red army is so weak that "the Czechs and the new Siberian Army have very little respect for its fighting quality," why do not the armed peasants wipe the dictators off the face of the earth? "Bread cards," of course, are a powerful asset. But bread cards are needed only for the dictators *par excellence*, the industrial workers, whereas the villagers, eighty per cent of the population, produce their own bread. Why, then, did they not overthrow Lenin after the disappointment of Brest-Litovsk, when according to Mr. Bullard, nothing was left for Lenin and Trotzky but to commit suicide? Granted even that the red army became later a powerful factor; yet after Brest-Litovsk there was no red army in existence, and even later the force of an armed people is incomparably stronger than the force of a mercenary army. What, then, is the secret of Bolshevik power? Mr. Bullard devotes a whole chapter to "German gold." What does it explain in the present Russian situation? What bearing has it upon the alignment of forces in Russia? Mr. Bullard himself admits that the Bolsheviks were no friends of German autocracy. The question of "German gold" at the most reduces itself to a question of the political morality of a few Bolshevik leaders. And how utterly useless it seems to dwell on such trifles in a book attempting to explain historic events in a colossal country!

What remains for Mr. Bullard is the analogy with the pendulum. Autocracy — Democracy — Autocracy. The Tzar — Kerensky—Lenin. Yet each link of this analogy suffers from a certain misconception. Mr. Bullard has admitted that the Kerensky régime was not democratic. The Tzar ruled not, as Mr. Bullard contends, because his opponents were not united, but because the majority were not his opponents. The peasantry of the country tacitly agreed to his domination. The revolution of 1905–6 was broken because the peasants in soldiers' uniforms remained loyal to their "little father." As soon as the army, an overwhelmingly peasant army, revolted, the Tzar lost his power. Mr. Bullard has strained this point in order to have an analogy with the tyranny of Lenin. But even if this analogy were correct, what would it add to the understanding of present Russia? Momentous changes were taking place in Russian

society even under the Romanoffs. Great forces were accumulating under the crust of an autocratic order. The order itself was undergoing transformations.

Mr. Bullard devotes part of his book to the Siberian phase of the Russian crises. While some of these chapters are very illuminating, many an assertion would seem rather light-hearted in view of the recent events. The book was completed when Koltchak's prospect was bright and presents this episode in a very favorable light. His whole picture of the Koltchak movement has been proven by subsequent events as in absolute contradiction to the facts. Koltchak collapsed because he lacked support, because all Siberia was against him. Shall we draw the conclusion that some of Mr. Bullard's material concerning Soviet Russia is equally inadequate?

Altogether Mr. Bullard's book, while admirably sketching the Russian situation in the summer of 1917, while containing interesting data concerning the events in Siberia and the Allied diplomacy in Russia, also some correct observations over the psychology of the Russians, fails to give an adequate account of the situation in Russia under the Soviets and is too ready to accept popular explanations which do not throw light on the central issue of the Russian revolution. Many minor errors, many misstatements concerning the history of revolutionary movements and revolutionary doctrines, are only natural with a non-Russian who does not master the Russian language.

MOISSAYE J. OLGIN,
New York City.

Bolshevism at Work. By WILLIAM T. GOODE, M. A. Harcourt, Brace & Howe. N. Y., 1920, pp. 143.

This book deals with conditions in Russia during July and August of 1919, when Mr. Goode visited that country as a correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*. Though nothing in it will prove startlingly new, the work is a most surprisingly complete and sympathetic exposition of the Bolshevik government as a "going concern," condensed into 143 pages.

On the outer cover, we read: "This is not a work of propaganda, but an accurate and authoritative answer to the question: What has the Soviet government actually done in such fields as industry, land, labor, food control, education, trade unions, national control, national health, and the judicial systems?

. . ." Obviously, it would be impossible to give a really